

# MANIA: Stuck Behind The Enemy Line

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# **MANIA: Stuck Behind The Enemy Line**

# MANIA: Stuck Behind The Enemy Line

by Kid Zap (KID-Z4P)

Jeremy is sent to Africa by Interpol to find an AWOL officer and a defector, both of whom have been attempting to take down a notorious poacher. Along the way, they have a run-in with some new allies.

Reads: 208 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

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# Prologue

Reads: 19 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Japan~

\*A SWAT truck arrives at a high-class house and a unit gets into position\*

SWAT Leader: International Police! We have a search warrant!

\*Nothing happens\*

SWAT Leader: Ram it.

\*One of the officers uses a battering ram to bust the door open, allowing the team to enter\*

\*A female figure runs off\*

SWAT Officer: We got a runner!

SWAT Leader: I got it! Check the house!

\*The officers do so, while the leader chases the runner\*

~Outside~

\*The runner rushes out the backdoor\*

SWAT Leader: \*Rushes out the backdoor\* Stop!

\*The runner frantically tries to climb a fence\*

SWAT Leader: \*Grabs the runner and throws her to the ground, before aiming at her\*

Runner: \*Panting\* ... \*Slowly faces the leader, revealing her face\*



Leader: Akane Tachibana, you're under arrest.

{Minutes Later}

\*The team walks a handcuffed Akane out of the house, along with the evidence that she had\*

SWAT Officer: A whole crate of firearms, and all of them have the serial numbers filed off. Got anything to say about that?

Akane: ...

\*The team stuffs her into an assisting patrol car before it drives off\*

~Streets~

Akane: ...

Officer: Since we're on the subject, we should ask: Are you a member of... that group?

Akane: ... You mean the Crimson Elite?

Officer 2: Yep.

Akane: ... \*Nods\* I am.

Officer: There's currently a lot of backlash getting thrown at them for their actions in the US and other countries.

Akane: ... Like what?

Officer 2: They caused havoc at Universal City. Then, they attacked an Interpol officer to get to a treasure. Then, they teamed up with the Taliban to go after some pirate ships. But do you wanna know what they all have in common?

Akane: ... Hm?

Officer: In each escapade, this kid with a cowboy hat would come in and pretty much screw them over. He gave one guy a superhero punch, threw a "pirate" overboard, and took on and defeated a Taliban platoon. Can you believe that?

Akane: ...

Officer 2: That kid is a hero, that's for sure. It's only a matter of time before he comes onto your turf to really take you all on. What do you think about that?

Akane: ... \*Looks to her left\* ... I think you better brace yourselves.

Officer: Why?

\*SMASH!\*

\*The patrol car crashes into an electricity pole\*

\*Someone steps out of the assailant car and approaches the now-damaged backdoor\*

Akane: Ugh... \*Turns to see...\*



Girl: Sorry about that. \*Grabs the handcuff keys and uncuffs Akane\*



I was gonna pick you up, but then, I heard about Interpol issuing a search warrant.

Akane: I'm just lucky that it wasn't for the whole Crimson Elite.

Girl: No, but you really need to be careful. We already have our lawyers combing for an appeal for you. Come on.

\*They enter the assailant car and drive off\*

Akane: So, what do we do now, Nazuna?

Nazuna: Arisu wants us to work with B-Platoon for the time being. Right now, we have to meet up with them at the airport.

Akane: The airport?

Nazuna: Yeah, there was some chatter about a smuggling op of sorts. There's a recent stockpile of horns that needs to be shipped out.

Akane: Horns?

Nazuna: Rhino horns.

Akane: ... Where are we even going?

Nazuna: Haven't you guessed by now? We're heading to Africa.

Akane: Africa? I thought the op was taking place here.

Nazuna: No, the stockpile needs to be shipped directly from Africa and straight to where they need to go. I just hope our "mole problem" doesn't screw us up.

Akane: \*?\* Mole problem?

{Later}

~Airport~

By now, news of Akane's breakout was already spreading.

\*The faces of a particular group are concealed, but their jackets are visible\*

Male: Sheesh. What's keeping them?

Female: Be patient. They'll come.

Female 2: I hope they do. The news of Akane's breakout is already spreading like wildfire.

Male 2: Nazuna already has the legal team looking for an appeal for her. The police departments from all over the world can arrest us, but they can't hold onto us.

Female 3: Man, isn't this exciting? Ever since we started this ring, we had to watch from our soil. But we're actually on our way to Africa.

Male 3: Well, it's technically *our* platoon's first time, but I get what you mean.

Unbeknownst to them, one of the members is texting someone.

"We're heading to Africa soon. I'll leak the location to you when we arrive."

"Okay. Keep your cover up."

\*Text notification\*

Female: \*Checks her phone\* About time.

Male: Have they arrived?

Female: They have. They're wearing disguises, but they'll let us know what they're wearing. \*Swipes to show a photo of a particular figure\* ... Let's see if you can stop us this time... \*Smirks\* ...Torres.

# Main Heroes

Reads: 38 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

# Jeremy



Jeremy Torres (AKA: Kid Zap)



SpongeBob SquarePants

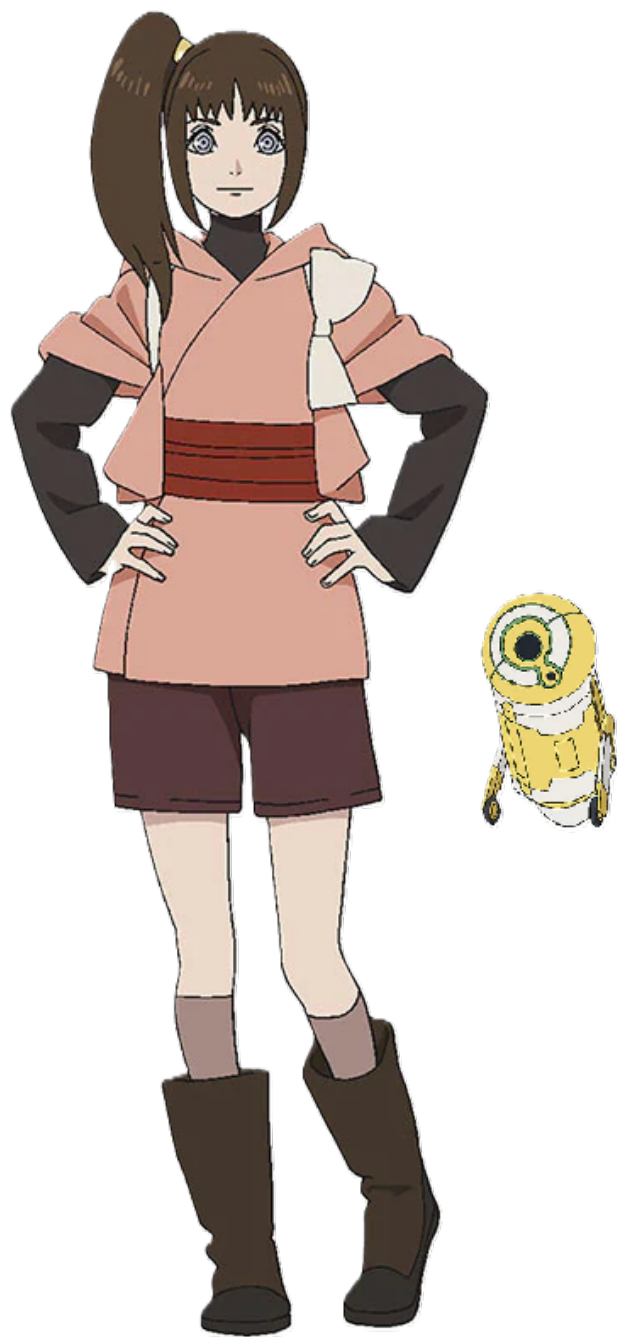


Hilda Löfgren

Steven



Steven Tsujisaka



Kara Lah

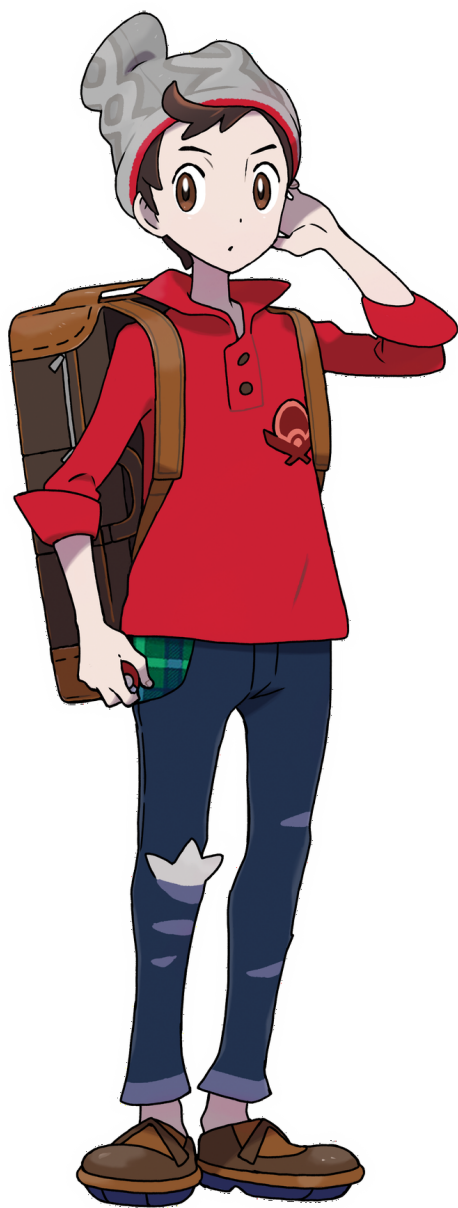




Frida Auclair



Gregory "Greg" Thornton



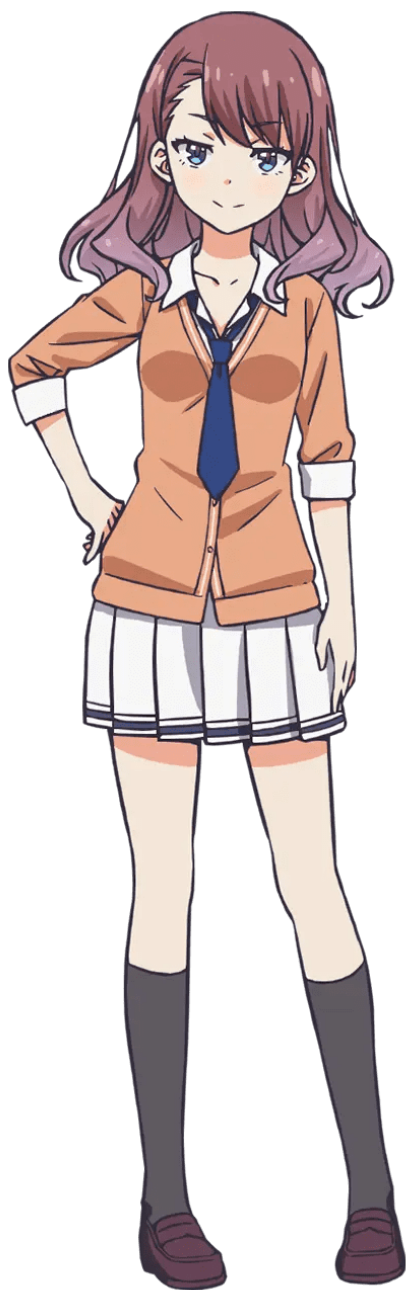
Victor McNeal



David Olden



Lewis Delgado



Maya Satō



Louise Delgado

--~=-~=-~=-

**A/N: Jolene and I are having an argument about what I'm doing with the MANIA series (I don't want to talk about it). So, I've decided to not feature her. As for Tony, he's kind of siding with her in said argument. So, I won't feature him either.**

# Main Villains

Reads: 19 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0





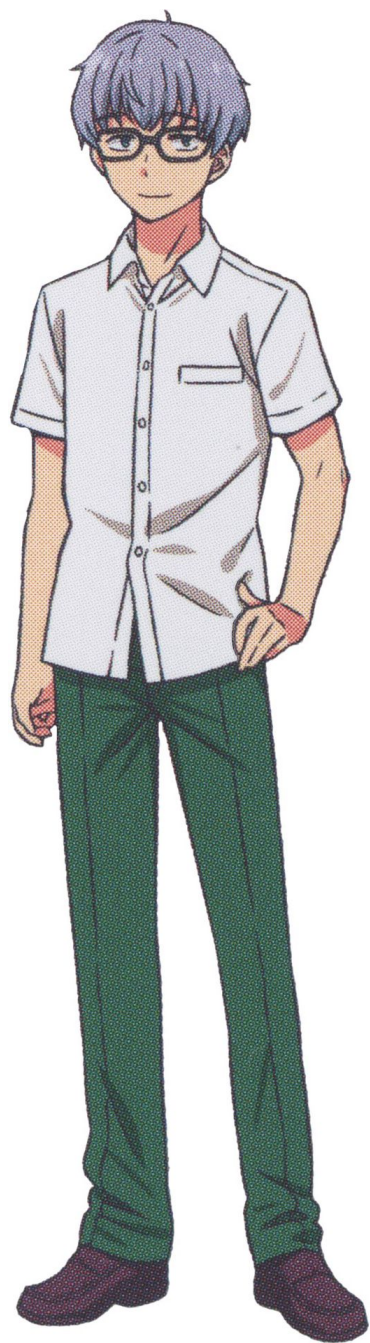
Honami Ichinose



Ryūji Kanzaki



Chihiro Shiranami



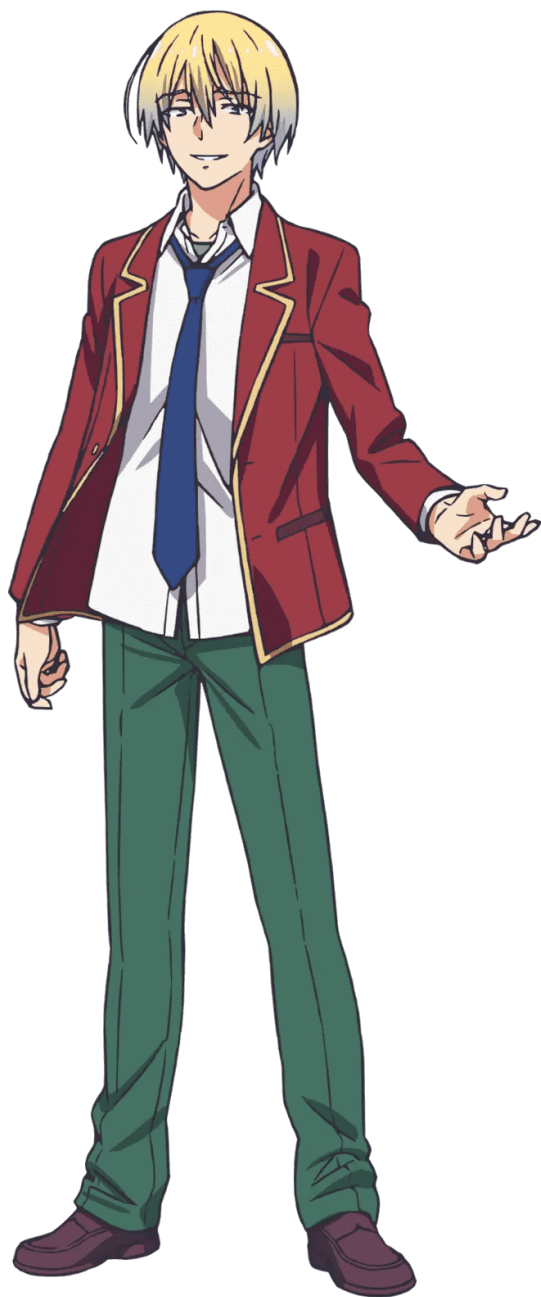
Tetsuya Hamaguchi



Yume Kobashi



Mako Amikura



Miyabi Nagumo

# Side Villains

Reads: 12 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0





Akane Tachibana



Nazuna Asahina

# Prepping For Africa

Reads: 17 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

\*Jeremy's POV\*

Three platoons.

I have taken on three platoons from that infamous group of Japanese nobles, the Crimson Elite.

The first, D-Platoon, met an honorable defeat.

The second, A-Platoon, was apprehended by Interpol.

The third, C-Platoon, had been dropped into the ocean.

All that remains is B-Platoon.

D-Platoon specializes in the fire element.

A-Platoon with wind.

C-Platoon with (white) water.

All I know about B-Platoon is that they specialize in the earth element.

And trust me when I say this: I really want nothing to do with them.

And yet, somehow, I always encounter the Crimson Elite.

Then again, an upside to this is that I get to encounter new friends along the way.

\*Third Person POV\*

~Interpol California Office, San Mateo~

Cartwright: \*On the phone\* I'm telling you, one of our guys has compromised our files, and I'm not too fond of it. \*Listens\* Yes, and as soon as you're finished, I want a full report on how security was breached in the first place. And while you're at it, check the files, and see if anything else is missing. \*Listens\* Okay. Bye. \*Hangs up\*

\*Knocking at the door\*

Cartwright: Come in!

\*Door opens\*

Amir: \*Enters\* I brought them, just like you requested.

\*A couple of familiar faces enter\*

Jeremy & SpongeBob: Hi.

Cartwright: Ah, you've come.

Jeremy: What's this about an AWOL officer of yours? Your details were pretty vague when you called us.

Cartwright: Well, since you're here, I might as well cut straight to the point. \*Pulls out a photo of a young man\*

SpongeBob: Who's he?

Cartwright: This is Gregory Thornton. To put it simply, he's a straight-A member of the force. Two letters of commendation from his commanding officer, me by the way; perfect evals; and he's on the shortlist for early promotion.

Jeremy: Sounds like he's working out okay.

Cartwright: Well, he was. He's been a model employee. Aside from fieldwork, he does an excellent job in the mailroom. \*Pulls out a file\* That is until this pops up. This is a confidential case file associated with the Worldwide Wildlife Fund. Now, 2 years ago, we established a reward, and we hired some of the best bounty hunters on Earth to find... \*Pulls out photos of some familiar faces\* ...these guys.

Jeremy: ... The Crimson Elite. \*Notices a photo of Maya... and snatches it\*

Amir: Yeah, I forgot to get rid of that one. Maya admitted that she used to be a "professional contraband pusher".

Jeremy: What kind?

Amir: Anything she got her hands on at the time. Firearms, antiquities, ancient relics, stolen vehicles...

Cartwright: Allegedly, they've been involved in the poaching trade in Africa for some time.

Jeremy: "Allegedly", which means there's no proof.

Cartwright: And recently, \*Points to one photo\* this girl, Honami Ichinose, is said to be heading over to Africa in person right now, most likely to ensure that a recent stockpile of "ill-gotten goods" gets shipped to who knows where. And another thing, there have been several poachers pushing several African species right to the brink of extinction, possibly under the orders of the Crimson Elite.

SpongeBob: Okay. What's the Crimson Elite got to do with Gregory?

Amir: Well, Greg hasn't been back here to work since last Monday. Naturally, we got concerned. In his locker, we found this file. \*Pulls out an article\* Along with this article of something that happened in Africa. \*Reads it\* "Rhino horn stockpile, stolen from Nabo Ranch".

Cartwright: Nabo Ranch is an animal preserve in Kambezi, run by the WWF.

Amir: \*Shows a map\* Greg even circled said ranch on the map.

Jeremy: So, you think Greg made some connection between my biggest rivals at the moment and the stolen horns?

Amir: Actually, we're suggesting more than that. We think he skipped out on a good steady job again for a crack at a \$50,000 reward, and a chance to make the big score that the bounty hunters

couldn't. We should have seen it coming.

Cartwright: He also booked a flight to Kambezi 2 days ago, and he used our travel agency, and he charged it to this office.

SpongeBob: What do you think caused him to behave like this?

Amir: ... Well, he once admitted that he's jealous of me.

Jeremy: \*\* Why you?

Amir: We grew up together, Greg and I. Then, things got difficult for him after we graduated. While I'm out there chasing some of the world's biggest crooks, he's stuck working in the mail rooms most of the time. He considers the stuff he does outside as scarce. He really wants to high-class crooks himself.

Cartwright: Well, we think he's trying to prove something here that he's not ready to prove. He's still a rookie. But despite having that status, he's been doing all kinds of tricks to prevent being found. That's why I called you.

SpongeBob: To find the guy.

Amir: I have already sent a message to the WWF office in Kambezi, telling them that you are on the way.

Jeremy: But Africa? I can't just go to Africa.

Cartwright: Why not?

Jeremy: ...

Amir: Listen, this kid is chasing some ruthless characters. He is a loose cannon.

Cartwright: Besides, those ruthless characters are... your "biggest rivals". I mean, how can you not go? You have the most knowledge of them.

Jeremy: No, just three of the platoons. I've never taken on B-Platoon, let alone this Ichinose girl.

SpongeBob: It doesn't mean it wouldn't hurt to try. We'll go to Africa to find him. And maybe, we can stop the Crimson Elite's poaching business while we're at it.

Cartwright: Sounds like a plan.

Jeremy: ... \*Sigh\* Alright. I'll go. But I'll need my team for this.

Amir: Who do you want to bring?

# The Flight

Reads: 18 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Private Jet~

Meanwhile, up in the sky, a Crimson Elite platoon, along with Akane and Nazuna, is making their way to Kambezi right now.

Akane: \*Reading an article\* Well, our job has already gotten difficult.

Nazuna: What do you mean?

Akane: There's an article about a Scandinavian scout program visiting Kambezi today.

Nazuna: So?

Akane: So, there'll be more people visiting the reserves, which means it'll be easy for poachers to get caught in the act. Including *our* guys.

Nazuna: Won't make much of a difference. We're armed, they're not.

Female: Unless you count... "you-know-who".

Akane: ... You mean... Kid Zap?

Female: Of course. He's not one to carry a gun, but he does have those powers of his.

Nazuna: He wears a cowboy hat and he doesn't carry a gun?  
\*Scoffs\* And he calls himself a "cowboy".

Female: Regardless, he still needs to be taken seriously, especially considering how he took on and defeated three of the platoons. Kiyotaka in Universal City; Arisu in San Francisco; and Kakeru in



the Phillipines.

Akane: There's also the fact that three of our own defected to his side.

Female: Oh, I know, Akane. Maya wanted out of our shenanigans; Masumi was working undercover under her orders; and somehow, Torres got into Shiho's head. Heh. That one in particular has been an... inspiration for me. He got into our heads. So, I suggest that...

\*Camera pans to reveal...\*

Honami: ...we return the favor.

Nazuna: How?

Honami: We're going to kidnap someone close to him. And when he tries to rescue them... \*Pulls out a combat knife\* ...we'll gut them.

Akane & Nazuna: ... \*Gulp\*

Honami: As of right now, we're the Crimson Elite's only hope in finishing off that rascal and his band of do-whatever-the-hell-you-want. And it should be easy to lure him in. He's always a supporter of wildlife. So, our poaching trade should catch his eye.

Akane: But he only supports from afar. And he's been trying to avoid us after the last few conflicts. How could he come all the way to Africa?

Honami: Trust me. There's no way he could resist this opportunity.

Pilot (Over the speakers): Attention, we are now making our descent to Kambezi. Please remain seated and fasten your seatbelts.

\*Everyone does so\*

Honami: He may be the type to "just help out", but when animal lives are on the line, he just can't pass that up either.

# Arriving In Kambezi

Reads: 11 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Kambezi, Africa~

After some preparation, the team arrived in Kambezi.

Right now, they're making their way to Nabo Ranch.

Jeremy: \*Looking around\* Not much of a difference here. It's pretty much like every other African wilderness zone.

SpongeBob: I wonder what makes Kambezi stand out.

Steven: Didn't that one article mention something about stolen rhino horns?

Jeremy: Yeah, but Amir just read the kicker.

Steven: I looked up the whole thing. The horns in question are all from black rhinos.

Kara: There's a black rhino?

Steven: Mm-hmm. \*Pulls up a picture on his phone\* This is what they look like.

Kara: ... It... looks no different from a standard rhino.

Steven: No, there's a difference. \*Pulls up another photo\* This is the rhino that everyone's used to seeing all the time. See the difference now?

Kara: \*!\* Oh! Now, I do. Their mouths look different.

Steven: This rhino has "square lips". Black rhinos have "hook lips".

Jeremy: Another difference is that black rhinos are endangered.

There are only about 3000 of them roaming around Africa. Prior to the turn of the millennium, there were only about 1000.

Victor: Poor things. It's hard to imagine seeing them go extinct.

Lewis: It's even harder to imagine seeing them getting poached for their horns. I mean, poachers think it's as easy as sawing off elephant tusks.

Maya: ...

Jeremy: You okay?

Maya: ... Not to drift off-topic, but... Did you see my photo in that file?

Jeremy: Amir said he forgot to get rid of it. It's no big deal.

Maya: To the US, it isn't. To every other Interpol country, it is.

~Front Gate, Nabo Ranch~

\*The team arrives\*

Jeremy: Here we are.

Guard: Can I help you?

Jeremy: Interpol sent us. We need to see the leader of this ranch.

Guard: \*Points down the road\* Just keep heading down the road and you'll see the main office.

Jeremy: Thank you. \*He and the others continue\*

\*The gate opens, allowing them to enter\*

Maya: \*Glances at a lone black rhino\* ... \*Sigh\* I'm glad to be away from the Crimson Elite.

~Main Building~

Upon arriving, they see a class of scouts having a look around, and

a woman with a ranger's hat in her hand.

Woman: We've been waging war with the poachers for years. And we've all been affected by it. And now, you are gone, Shane. You were a good friend and a brave ranger. You believed that the stockpile you were guarding represented hope. You hoped that by burning those horns, we might finally get our message across to world governments to enforce the import ban on rhino horns and stop the slaughter of our black rhinos before they become extinct, just like what happened many years ago. Not to mention, the slaughter of the people trying to protect them. People like you, Shane. You gave your life for that dream. If we lose the rhinos, who will be next? This is a war that we simply must win. We won't let you down, old friend. We'll get those horns back. Whatever it takes.

SpongeBob: ... Um...

Woman: \*Turns to them\* Oh, hello. \*Puts the hat away\* Can I help you?

Jeremy: Interpol sent us to help you.

Woman: I see. You must be Mister Torres then. Francine Willard, WWF. I've been expecting you.

Jeremy: \*Shakes her hand\* Please. Call me "Jeremy". This is SpongeBob SquarePants, Steven Tsujisaka, Kara Lah, Victor McNeal, Lewis Delgado, and Maya Satō.

???: In other words, you're the one they call "Kid Zap", are you not?

\*Two men in military clothing approach them\*

Jeremy: ... Y-Yes.

Francine: This is General Seko, Kambezi Defense Force.

Seko: Your reputation precedes you, young man. So has the WWF. It is not every outsider company that would come to an African country and create a sanctuary like Nabo Ranch for the sole purpose of protecting endangered animals.

Jeremy: Well, from what Interpol knows about the poaching problem, Africa and what's left of the rhino population are pretty lucky to have the WWF in their corner.

Seko: Yes. But even with my soldiers reinforcing the WWF's rangers, there isn't enough manpower to stop the poachers. Are you here to help Kate with that problem?

SpongeBob: Well, we'd love to, but we're here on a more separate matter.

Francine: They said that an Interpol officer has gone AWOL. These guys are here to help look for that officer right now.

Seko: I see. Well, either way, enjoy your visit. But be careful. Africa is like a sleeping lion. It's only very beautiful when left alone. \*He and the other soldier leave\*

Francine: I am curious. What has made this officer go on the run?

Steven: Well, somehow, he made a connection to your stolen rhino horns. They think he's tracking a poaching trader, by the name of Honami Ichinose. Have you heard of her?

Francine: No. Should I?

Kara: She's a member of this Japanese group called the Crimson Elite. Does that name ring any bells?

Francine: \*Sigh\* That one, yes. That group name is synonymous with just about any kind of crime imaginable. What's the officer's name again?

Victor: Gregory Thornton. \*Shows a picture\* Look familiar?

Francine: Hm. I can't say that he looks familiar.

Lewis: I'll go ask the other rangers. Maybe, one of them saw him at some point. \*Strolls around\*

Francine: So, why hasn't he told his coworkers about this?

Maya: He's kind of a... loose cannon. So, naturally, he wouldn't bother alerting anyone else.

Francine: Well, there's no way he could've done this without alerting the rangers here in Africa. Someone must've seen him, or we would've known by now.

Jeremy: From what Interpol told us, he's good at covering his tracks.

Lewis: \*Looking around\* Looks like the other rangers are reinforcing everything. I can't say I blame them. Their coworker got killed after all.

???: Lewis?!

Lewis: \*Turns to see one of the scouts\* Louise?!

Louise: \*Waving happily\*

Lewis: Holy smokes.

Louise: \*Runs to him and gives him a hug\*

Lewis: \*Hugs back\* Hey, little cousin!

Louise: \*Breaks the hug\* What are you doing here?

Lewis: Oh, just looking for a missing person. My friends and I thought he was here in Kambezi. What about you?

Louise: The Sparrow Scouts and I just got here for a safari trip. It's our first time here in Africa and we really want it to be memorable. \*Pulls out her camera\* How about one for the road?

Lewis: Oh, that'd be nice.

Louise: \*Aims her camera at both herself and Lewis, before snapping a photo\* There we go.

\*The photo prints out\*

Louise: \*Examining the photo\* \*?\* Huh?

Lewis: What?

Louise: Did I just get...?

???: Yep!

Lewis & Louise: \*!\* Ahh! \*They both turn to see...\*

Louise: Oh. I didn't think you'd do that.

Girl: I couldn't resist it.

Jeremy: \*He and SpongeBob approach them\* Hey, Lewis, have you asked any of... the... rangers?

SpongeBob: Did we interrupt something?

Lewis: No, you're fine, guys. I was just catching up with my little cousin. \*Turns to the kids\* Guys, these are two of my friends. Jeremy Torres and SpongeBob SquarePants.

Boy: That's a weird name.

Girl 2: \*Elbows him\* Don't be rude.

Lewis: Boys, this here is my little cousin, Louise Delgado, and... I'm sorry. I didn't get your names.

Girl: Right. Allow us to introduce ourselves. I'm Hilda Löfgren.

Girl 2: My name's Frida Auclair.

Boy: And I'm David Olden.

\*Jeremy and SpongeBob wave kindly at them\*

Louise: So, who is this guy you're looking for?

Jeremy: His name is Gregory Thornton. He's a... law enforcer who went AWOL while trying to catch a high-class poacher.

Hilda: \*!\* A poacher?

# The Warehouse

Reads: 11 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Warehouse~

Meanwhile, B-Platoon, having just arrived at their private warehouse is watching some of their workers moving crates around; each crate containing sawed-off rhino horns.

Male: Make sure you keep these crates secured. Drop one into the water, and we'll drop you in response.

Workers: We know.

Honami: Relax, Ryūji. They know what they're doing.

Ryūji: You better hope so. I don't like knowing the Crimson Elite is already garnering flak about this op.

\*A jeep arrives and a soldier steps off with a box in his hands\*

Akane: Oh. He arrived.

Honami: Chihiro, could you keep an eye on the workers at the dock?

Female 2: Sure. \*Leaves\*

Soldier: \*Approaches her\* Just as my boss had promised you.

Honami: \*Opens the box, revealing...\* Sugar packets?

Soldier: We... could find any coffee ones. So, we went with brown sugar.

Honami: ... Fair enough. I've seen dark variants of brown sugar back in Japan.



Soldier: Either way, that refinery of yours proved to be quite effective.

Honami: The perfect way to smuggle this product.

Soldier: \*Puts the box down\* So, where is the money?

Honami: Oh, don't worry. You get your money as soon as the product is safely across the border in South Africa.

Soldier: But that was not our deal. Our agreement was payment in full, in advance.

Ryūji: The deal's changed. There's always change when it comes to just about any-

Soldier: \*Chokes him\* We have risked everything to acquire the product! We need that money to build up those war machines!

Male 2: \*Pulls out a handgun and aims at the soldier's head\* I'd let him go if I were you.

Solider: ... \*Releases Ryūji\*

Ryūji: Thank you, Tetsuya. \*Turns back to the soldier\* Don't ever touch me like that again! No one touches us, you understand?!

Soldier: ...

Honami: Now, listen carefully. Zheng is the biggest in the business. He's the only person we know who can handle a load this big.

Soldier: We want our money.

Ryūji: We know, you broken record.

Female 3: We're meeting him in the Safari Room of the Gold City Hotel at 5 PM. As soon as we see the money, we'll join you at the rendezvous point.

Honami: You get paid, and everybody goes home happy. That's the way it is now.

Ryūji: Tell your boss to be there.

Soldier: Oh, we will be there. \*Pulls out a dagger\* But if you do not have our money this time, we will cut you into small pieces. Then, you will not have to worry about me or anyone like me touching you again. \*Leaves\*

Ryūji: ... \*Dry chuckle\* They're gonna cut us? They don't even know who they're really dealing with.

Unbeknownst to anyone, someone new was watching from the shadows.

Gregory: ... But I do.

# A Surprising Loss

Reads: 6 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

WARNING: This chapter contains a very serious wildlife moment.

Reader discretion is advised.

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~Nabo Ranch~

Although their mission is to locate Gregory, the team still took a chance at having a look around the wilderness, while hanging out with the Sparrow Scouts.

While asking the rangers about Gregory, Lewis and Louise were catching up with each other.

On the other hand, Jeremy, SpongeBob, and Maya chatted with Hilda, Frida, and David.

SpongeBob: Just when we thought the Blue Shell was bad enough, said shell got struck by lightning, making it even more dangerous, and then, boom! Some of us fell off the road and into the ocean.

David: And Jeremy got electrical powers because of that?

SpongeBob: Uh-huh.

David: That sounds like a "1-in-1,000,000" gift.

Maya: So, I decided to confront Kiyotaka about what we've become over time, and in front of our fellow D-Platoon members, I announced my resignation, slamming my Crimson Elite lapel onto his desk, before walking out of the main headquarters.

Frida: That must've taken tons of courage to do such a thing.

Maya: At the time, I was the only one, but I managed to convince a tragic few to consider it.

Frida: Just a few?

Maya: Sadly, yes.

Jeremy: \*Observing some black rhinos with Hilda\*

Hilda: You know, you and I have a lot in common.

Jeremy: How so?

Hilda: We're both adventure lovers, we both support wildlife around the world, we're both super nice to people...

Jeremy: We both have a strong sense of truth and justice.

Hilda: And we're both super imaginative.

Francine: \*Approaches them\* Observing the rhinos?

Jeremy: \*He and Hilda nod\* Mm-hmm.

Francine: You're looking at 50 million years of survival.

Hilda: Now, they're only 3000 left?

Jeremy: 3,142 to be precise.

Francine: Because of the very thing nature gave them to protect themselves.

Lewis: \*He and Louise return\* I checked with all the rangers. Nobody's seen Gregory.

Jeremy: Well, that doesn't make sense. No one saw him.

Louise: It's like you guys said. This fellow is good at staying hidden.

Ranger: \*Exits the building\* Yeah, we're on our way. \*Turns to Francine\* We've got more poachers loose, Miss Willard.

Francine: Oh, no. Let's check it out. \*Turns to the others\* You'd better stay here.

Jeremy: No way. We're coming along.

Ranger: We can handle it.

Jeremy: Didn't say you couldn't. Just offering help.

Francine: Alright. come on.

\*They all leave\*

~Clearing~

\*They arrive at a clearing, where they see some rangers with a restrained poacher\*

Francine: You found him!

Ranger 2: We found one, actually. There were three poachers. This guy was just beyond the trees. \*Shows a sack\* And he had this in his hand.

Jeremy: \*Opens the sack\* Oh, god. I was expecting one horn.

Francine: They didn't bother cutting one at a time.

Ranger: Take him to the ranch.

Rangers: Yes, sir. \*They do so\*

\*Bellowing\*

\*They turn to where it came from\*

Francine: Oh, my god. \*She and the others head into the clearing\*

Upon arriving, they saw something they shouldn't have seen.

A weakened black rhino with no horns... and a big nasty wound.

Everyone: ...

Rhino: \*Bellowing in pain\*

Jeremy: ... \*Notices something on the ground\* ... Is that...?

Ranger 3: ... Yes. It's a chainsaw.

Ranger 4: They used a chainsaw just to get away faster. A chainsaw, for god's sake! It never stops, sir. Dammit, it never stops!

Ranger: We know. We all do.

Rhino: \*Moaning\*

Francine: ... \*Examines the rhino\* ... \*Sigh\*

SpongeBob: ... Is it...?

Francine: ... He's an elder. He's already on the brink of death.

Ranger: ... \*Approaches the rhino... and aims his rifle at it\*

Everyone: \*!\*

Ranger: ... I'd leave if I were you.

\*The team respectfully does so... except for Jeremy\*

Rhino: \*Bellowing in pain\*

Jeremy: ...

Steven: Come on. \*Pulls him away\*

Ranger: ... It'll be okay. \*Prays in Swahili\*

\*The team walks back to the building\*

Jeremy: ...

\*Distant gunshot\*

Jeremy: \*Stops\* ... \*Takes a deep breath\* ... Why did I see that?  
\*Continues on\*

# The Things We Do

Reads: 9 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Warehouse~

Back at the warehouse, one of the B-Platoon members, now alone, is looking around the place.

Female: ... \*Examining the horns\* ... \*Grabs one of them\* ...

\*Flashback\*

{Long Ago}

~Japan~

Maya: \*Exits a mansion\*

Masumi: \*She and a few others arrive\* Maya?

Maya: What?

Masumi: What are you doing?

Maya: I'm resigning.

Masumi: Resigning? Why?

Maya: I can't do any of this anymore. I thought we were better than this.

Masumi: Maya, it's no big deal. We-

Maya: Maybe, *you* don't see it as a big deal, but *I* do. Our high school was established by the Japanese government to nurture young graduates who will support the country. It boasts a 100% employment and college entry rate, and with thorough, state-directed teaching methods, it spares no effort in pursuing the

nation's desired future. But look where we are now. We've already got what we wanted, but we're also committing such... hideous actions for kicks. If this is the future that Japan is desiring, then I don't want any part of it. And it wouldn't hurt for you to think about it. \*Leaves\*

\*The small crowd just gazed in silence after listening to Maya's speech... including the female member\*

\*Flashback ends\*

Female: ... The things we do in our lives.

~Nabo Ranch~

Meanwhile, back at Nabo Ranch, the rangers are interrogating the poacher they arrested.

Ranger 5: \*Showing the sawed-off horns\* Tazama hii. Pembe hizi zilitoka kwa kifarua mweusi. Spishi iliyo hatarini kutoweka. Na ilibidi utumie chainsaw kuiondoa. Je, una wazo lolote, au majuto yoyote, kuhusu ulichosababisha?

While this was happening, the team had just returned to the ranch.

Hilda: I don't think we'll ever get that image out of our heads.

Jeremy: That's just part of reality. Live long enough, and you'll see the gruesome side of things.

Frida: So we're told. I can't even imagine the creatures in our home getting... treated like that.

SpongeBob: ... Eh... Speaking of your home, where are you guys from anyway? I've heard of many scout programs, but I don't recall the Sparrow Scouts.

David: We're from a city-state called Trolberg. It's in a continent near Scandinavia called the Hulderlands.

Lewis: Yeah, I should know. I actually visited that continent once.



Hilda: You have?

Louise: It was just a family gathering at the time.

Lewis: That continent is just filled with all kinds of creatures that no other place on Earth has seen before. So, I too can't imagine them being treated the same way as that... unfortunate rhino.

Ranger 2: \*Approaches them\* Speaking of that rhino, we did get something from our prisoner. He speaks in a mountain dialect, but we have been able to determine that he was somehow involved in the recent stockpile theft.

Ranger: Who does he work for?

Ranger 2: We can't determine that. But he jabbered something about a "sugar house".

Francine: Sugar house?

Ranger 2: But that's just it.

Ranger: Well, thanks anyway.

Ranger 2: \*Leaves\*

Ranger: That's actually the third rhino this month.

Steven: Look, I gotta tell you. That is the sickest, cruelest, most inhumane thing we've ever seen in our lives. And for what? A few hundred dollars?

Francine: That's a year's wage for most Africans. I want to hate the poachers, but I can't.

Kara: So, who do you hate then?

Ranger: It's the traders, the ones who control the market. They are the ones who have to be stopped. They get over \$15,000 a kilo for those horns. That's more than the price of gold.

Victor: And more than enough to make it dangerous for anyone

who gets in their way, huh?

Francine: Like the guy you're looking for?

Jeremy: Yeah, especially him.

Maya: You know, I don't get it. Gregory cut out an article about the theft at the ranch and circled Nabo on the map. But nobody around here's seen him.

Ranger: Actually, this whole district is called Nabo. Maybe, he made some other connection.

Francine: \*!\* The poacher said something about a "sugar house". Maybe, he was talking about the abandoned Nabo Sugar Refinery. It's about 20 miles north of here.

Jeremy: Could be a base of operations. Let's check it out. \*He and the team leave\*

Hilda: ... \*Gets up\* Come on. \*She and her team leave\*

Jeremy: \*Notices this\* Uh... We can find it on our own.

Hilda: We didn't say you couldn't. Just offering some help.

Jeremy: ... Heh. I get it.

Hilda: And besides, we too like to get our hands on those crooks.

Jeremy: Okay. Just stay close.

# The Refinery

Reads: 7 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Road~

\*The team makes their way to the refinery\*

Maya: According to the article, there were over 2,000 horns in that stolen stockpile. They came from all over Africa. Some were confiscated, and others were removed from rhinos as part of a "de-horning" program to save them from poachers. It's also that said Nabo Ranch was planning on burning them. "As a symbol". In front of the world press. They figured if they destroyed millions of dollars worth of horns instead of selling them, then they'd convince the world leaders how urgent the current problem is and finally get them to enforce the import ban on rhino horns.

David: Won't burning those horns increase the demand?

Jeremy: There are less than 3200 black rhinos left on the planet. After the supply is gone, the demand is irrelevant.

~Warehouse~

Meanwhile, as the poachers' work continued, Gregory snuck onto one of the ships.

Gregory: ... \*Finds and grabs a small box\* ... Hmm. \*Opens it, revealing the sugar packets from before\* "Nabo Sugar Refinery"? I thought it closed down. \*Takes one and pockets it\* Are they turning it into a front or something? \*Puts the box back and leaves\* Maybe, it's time to let Interpol know where the heck I- \*Bumps into someone\*

Guard: \*Turns to him\* Oy! Where'd you come from?

Gregory: ... I was... just... looking for directions.

Guard: To where?

Soldier: \*Arrives\* What's this about?

Guard: He just popped out of nowhere. He's not even African like us.

Soldier: \*Examines Gregory\* Who are you? Are you a spy?

Gregory: ... Y-Yes.

Soldier: Who do you work for?

Gregory: ... Uh... Arisu Sakayanagi.

Soldier: The Crimson Elite.

Gregory: She just sent me to... keep an eye on things. You know, make sure everything goes down copacetic. You know.

Guard: It sounds as if you're a valued employee of Miss Sakayanagi.

Gregory: Oh, you got that straight.

Soldier: Good. My boss and I have been wanting to send the Crimson Elite a message that best expresses my feelings towards them. \*Turns to some other guards\* Hang him.

Gregory: \*?!\* Hang?!

\*The guards take away\*

Gregory: Wait. Wait! WAIT! I thought you guys were on the same page!

Soldier: Not really. Those elitists don't even know what the heck they're doing.

~Entrance~

\*The team arrives\*

Victor: Is this it?

Steven: Yep. This is it. Nabo Sugar.

Jeremy: \*Looks around\* Hmm. \*Heads to a different spot\* Follow me.

\*They all do so\*

Frida: W-What are you doing?

Jeremy: I thought we'd go in around the back in case there is a connection to the Crimson Elite.

~Inside~

\*The team enters to see a boat leaving\*

Kara: We found the horns, but the boat's leaving.

\*Shouting in the distance\*

Jeremy: \*He and the others turn to it\* What's that?

SpongeBob: I don't know.

\*They all skulk towards the commotion, only to see...\*

Gregory: \*Struggling\*

Jeremy: That's Gregory!

Louise: Oh, no. They're gonna hang him! What do we do?!

SpongeBob: \*Looks around\* Uh... \*Spots a truck\* I've got one idea: I'll get to that big truck over there. On my signal, I'll drive straight at 'em, and you guys grab Gregory.

Everyone: Got it.

SpongeBob: \*Heads to the truck\*

\*The guards tie a noose around Gregory's neck\*

SpongeBob: \*Starts the truck\* Ready...

\*The guards set Gregory up\*

SpongeBob: Go! \*Drives at them\*

\*The guards turn to see...\*

SpongeBob: Here I come, suckers! \*Chases the guards away\*

Jeremy: \*Runs to Gregory\* Gregory!

Gregory: Who are you guys?!

Steven: We'll tell you soon! Get to the truck!

\*They all run to the truck and jump into it, just as the guards shoot at them\*

SpongeBob: Back to the ranch, we go! \*Drives away\*

Gregory: I don't know you guys, but boy, am I glad to see that I'm not alone! What are you doing here?

Victor: No, dude, we'll ask the questions. What are *you* doing here?

# Need To Know

Reads: 12 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Private Jet~

Meanwhile, B-Platoon is chatting with a familiar face about the progress of the shipment, unaware of what happened at the refinery.

Kiyotaka (On the screen): You're certain that no one has found the warehouse.

Honami: Yes. As far as anyone's concerned, the sugar refinery has long been forgotten.

Kiyotaka (On the screen): You better hope so. I don't like knowing that Kid Zap is in Kambezi, even if he doesn't know about the refinery.

Ryūji: Don't worry. None of our own poachers have been captured. So, everything should be fine.

Female 3: \*Approaches them\* I wouldn't be so sure of that, Ryūji.

Chihiro: Is something wrong, Yume?

Yume: I just got a call from some of our guys. They said one of their own got caught by the Nabo Ranch Rangers while trying to get away.

Everyone: What?!

Kiyotaka (On the screen): Did they speak to the rangers?

Yume: I'm not sure. They said he mumbled about a "sugar house".

Tetsuya: \*Groans\* It's only a matter of time before Kid Zap locates

the refinery!

\*Phone ringing\*

Female: \*Answers\* Hello? \*Listens\* What?! \*Listens\* Are you sure?  
\*Listens\* Stay put. We're heading over! \*Hangs up\* Might've  
spoken too soon, Tetsuya. Kid Zap was spotted rescuing a hostage at  
the warehouse.

Everyone: \*Groaning in frustration\*

Honami: Come on! \*Leaves with B-Platoon\*

Nazuna: Akane, hold down the fort! \*Follows them\*

Kiyotaka (On the screen): ... Well, this call is over.

Akane: Hold on! I-I want to ask you about something.

Kiyotaka (On the screen): ... What?

Akane: R-Right after Nazuna came to my rescue and told me about  
this job in Africa, she mentioned something about a "mole problem".  
Do we have yet another... defector?

Kiyotaka (On the screen): ... \*Sigh\* I don't want to believe it, but I  
think we do. At some point, our activities in Africa have been  
getting leaked. When we checked to see where the leak was coming  
from, we discovered that it came from... us.

Akane: You mean, our headquarters?

Kiyotaka (On the screen): Yes. It seems that Maya's influence really  
has greatly affected some of our own.

Akane: ... Except for Shiho. She was influenced by Kid Zap instead.

Kiyotaka (On the screen): ... Mark my words, Akane. We're not  
going to stop until Kid Zap gets what's coming to him. \*Smirks a  
little\* And in case he foils this smuggling ring of ours, I have an  
even better plan.



~Nabo Ranch~

Back at the ranch, the team had just returned with Gregory, who couldn't believe his ears.

Gregory: I don't believe it. Did Amir really send you guys to look for me?

Jeremy: Yes, he did, Greg. He and Cartwright are worried sick about you.

Gregory: \*Sighs\* Of course.

SpongeBob: Come on, Gregory. Let's see if we can sort this out.

Gregory: I appreciate everything you guys have done for me. I owe you my life.

Hilda: And you owe your coworkers a huge explanation. Not to mention your longtime friend.

Gregory: I was just trying to prove to Interpol that I can be just as good as Cartwright and Amir are.

Steven: Gregory, they are experienced fieldworkers. Do you know what that means?

Gregory: It means that I need some fresh air myself since I'm stuck in the mail rooms.

Kara: It means you take things one step at a time, you think them through, and you ask for help when it's obvious you need it!

Gregory: Your words sound like as if I'm a loser.

Kara: That's not what I said.

Gregory: Yeah, but people like you think it. Just like Cartwright and Amir.

Jeremy: Gregory, they both love you. It's just that you never listen to anybody!

Francine: Why don't you guys come in here? We'll get something cool to drink.

Everyone: ... Fine.

~Inside~

Ranger: Just answer us one thing here.

Gregory: What?

Ranger: How did you ever connect the Crimson Elite with that sugar refinery?

Gregory: I wrote letters to every records office in Africa, asking for anything with any of their names on it. This one escrow officer gave me the one big score that Cartwright and Amir never found.

Frida: Nabo Sugar.

Gregory: Right. But no one knows the exact location of this refinery, especially since it closed down long ago due to bankruptcy. Then, this girl called me out of the blue, claiming to be defecting from the Crimson Elite. I didn't get her name, and I never met her in person, but she said that she wanted out of the business by selling out the whole smuggling ring.

Lewis: ... \*Glances at Maya\* Maya...

Maya: I know what you're going to say, Lewis. Just don't say it yet.

Louise: \*?\* Don't say what yet?

Lewis: You'll know soon.

Victor: Gregory, I'll admit, that is a very smart piece of detective work.

Gregory: Yeah, I thought so too. I guess that's why I figured I could bag Honami Ichinose all on my own.

David: I don't get it. You saw her arrive, but then, you saw her

leave. Why did you bother to stick around after that?

Gregory: 'Cause when I saw what was going down, I figured I could bag the whole operation by myself. The Crimson Elite, their supplier, the works.

Francine: This supplier. Who is he?

Gregory: I don't know. I just know that he's some African guy in a militaristic outfit. He and a few others took off in a boat with the horns and the sugar. Or rather what's disguised as sugar. That's why this bust is so huge. It's more than just rhino horns. It's like a whole general contraband operation. Aside from the horns, they've also got some kind of African powder or something. They're running it in these little sugar packets. \*Pulls out the packet he snatched\* In fact, I snatched one of those packets before they caught me. \*Passes it to Jeremy\*

Jeremy: "Brown Sugar". \*Tears it open\* ... \*Sniff\* \*?!\*

Ranger: What is it?

Jeremy: I don't know. It's got like a... scent to it. Sugar doesn't have a scent. But it does appear close to brown sugar.

Gregory: Exactly. That's why they're using the refinery as a front.

Jeremy: Give me a second. \*Grabs a thin cloth and places it over a glass cup\*

Gregory: What are you doin'?

Jeremy: I'm making a filter. \*Pours the packet onto the cloth\* Sugar dissolves in water. \*Grabs a water pitcher\* So... \*Pours the water onto the powder... but not much happens\* Nothin'.

\*The water rapidly falls into the glass\*

Gregory: That ain't like no powder I've ever seen.

David: What is that stuff?

Lewis: ... \*Pinches some of the powder... and tastes it\*

Steven: Don't just taste it. It could be-

Lewis: It's keratin.

Frida: Keratin?

Hilda: What's keratin?

Jeremy: It's the stuff your fingernails are made out of. It also comes from scales, hair, feathers, claws, hooves, vertebrate skin, and-  
\*Realizes\* ...horns.

Ranger: Including rhino horns.

Francine: I see. This means they're dealing with 2 different markets. They granulate some of the horns and sell them as a powder, while the rest are left alone and sold normally.

Kara: Where do they go?

Maya: Keratin is usually sold in Asia. Whole horns usually end up in Yemen.

Frida: Yeah, I heard the Chinese use keratin as an ingredient for medicines.

Louise: But what would they do with the whole horns in Yemen?

Jeremy: If I recall correctly, whole horns are used as carving material in Yemen. They make dagger handles out of it as a symbol of "virility".

Victor: The Crimson Elite is servicing 2 of the biggest markets in the world. If we could just stop that boat and get those horns, we might be able to bring down the whole smuggling ring.

SpongeBob: Any idea where that boat is going?

Gregory: Not really. \*!\* But one of the Elitists said they were gonna meet a buyer at some place called the... \*Ponders\* ...Gold City

Hotel at 5 PM today.

Francine: Gold City. That's an exclusive resort downriver, in South Africa.

Steven: How long would it take to get there?

Ranger: Maybe, an hour. Are you thinking of following the buyer?

Steven: No. I was thinking of taking his place.

Jeremy: \*?\* Taking his place?

Gregory: Dude, you're starting to sound like I've been acting. The buyer's name is Zheng. It's a Chinese name. And apparently, they know the guy.

Maya: He's right. We've encountered the Crimson Elite before. So, we can't really go.

Gregory: They don't know me. I can go. Besides, after what happened at the refinery, I don't have plans to go back there.

SpongeBob: How do you plan on taking his place?

Gregory: I don't know. \*Glances at Jeremy\* But I do know I need your help.

Jeremy: ... \*Smirks a little\*

# Gold City

Reads: 10 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Gold City Hotel, South Africa~

Lewis: \*Returns from the Reception Desk\* Zheng is registered in Room 580.

Gregory: Alright, they said the meeting's at 5:00. That gives us 10 minutes.

Hilda: After what he put us through, are you sure you want to trust him to pull this off?

Jeremy: I trust Greg. He's finally putting his trust in us.

SpongeBob: We'll be ready in case things go sour.

Gregory: ... You sure know how to turn on the heat.

{5 Minutes Later}

~Outside~

\*Two of the B-Platoon members arrive\*

Male 3: So, this is Gold City. I expected more.

Female 4: Like what? The appearance of El Dorado?

Male 3: A more... beautiful exterior. If the interior is beautiful, then so should the exterior.

Female 4: \*Smirks\* How "beautiful" are we talking about, Miyabi?

Miyabi: ... \*Smirks\* As beautiful as you, Mako.

\*They both giggle and enter the hotel\*

~Inside~

Victor: \*Spots the two enter\* Maya... \*Points to them\*

Maya: \*Spots them\* I see them. \*Checks her phone\* 4:55.

David: I believe that's the other team's cue.

~Room 580~

Steven: \*Knocks on the door\*

Man: What do you want?

Steven: Room service.

Man: Room service?

Steven: For Mister Zheng.

Man: One second. \*Approaches and opens the door\*

Steven: You are Mister Zheng, right?

Man: I am, but I wasn't expecting any room service.

Steven: You didn't?

Zheng: \*Shakes his head\* Did you get the name wrong?

Steven: Let me check the order. \*Grabs something from his jacket\*

Zheng: ... \*Examines Steven\* For a hotel worker, you're hardly dressed to fit the role.

Steven: \*?\* Pardon?

Zheng: Why are you dressed so casually?

Steven: Oh, this jacket has extra pockets for... anything I need to use. You know, like this thing. \*Pulls out a stun gun and zaps Zheng silly\* ... Whoops. Forgot to turn it off.

Zheng: ... \*Falls into slumber\*

Steven: I did it!

Jeremy: Thanks, Steve.

~Downstairs Diner~

Miyabi: \*Checking his phone\* 5:05. Where is he?

Gregory: And that's my cue. \*Approaches them\*

Louise: Looks like the other team did their part.

Gregory: Excuse me.

Mako: \*She and Miyabi turn to him\* Can we help you?

Gregory: Name's Gregory Thornton. Zheng sent me.

Miyabi: Where is Zheng? We're supposed to deal with him, but he's not showing up.

Gregory: Well, not this time.

Mako: Why?

Gregory: Well, Zheng likes to layer himself in deals this big. So, are we gonna dance around a little here, or are we gonna do some business?

Miyabi: If we're doing business, then where's the money? You need something to provide.

Gregory: Don't worry about the money. I want to see the horns first.

Miyabi: No, no, no, no. We're the ones who go first. You don't see the horns we're providing until we see the money you're providing. That's the way it is.

Gregory: That's not the way Zheng does business.

Miyabi: Then, that knucklehead has a problem.



Gregory: Look, either I see those horns first, or the deal's off.

Miyabi: You're bluffing the wrong elite, Mister Thornton. \*Gets in front of Gregory's face\* We don't tolerate receiving any bluffs from anyone.

Gregory: Uh-uh, I don't need to bluff.

Miyabi: \*Backs away\* Then, I'll give you 10 seconds to change your mind, or the bonehead goes home empty-handed.

Gregory: Look, pal. We both know there aren't any other buyers big enough to take those horns off your hands.

Miyabi: We can find some. We're good enough at locating. 5 seconds. 4. 3.

Mako: You know what? It's been a pleasure meeting you. \*Gets up\* Come on, Miyabi. \*Leaves\*

Miyabi: ... 2-1. \*Gets up\* I guess we're looking. \*Leaves\*

Gregory: Who's there to find?

Miyabi: Plenty of people!

???: Wait!

Mako: \*She and Miyabi turn to see...\* Who are you?

\*The team turns to see...\*

Gregory: Uh-oh.

Louise: Why is she here?

Victor: Beats me.

Francine: I'm with Gregory. I work for Zheng as well.

Gregory: \*Approaches them\*

Miyabi: So?

Francine: So, you lot are a bit bull-headed, and I am not about to incur our boss's displeasure by watching this deal fall apart. \*Turns to Gregory\* Would you rather get our throats cut for losing his money to this guy?

Gregory: ... N-No, Miss Francine. Of course not.

Francine: We have a method. You show one of us the horns. That one person calls the other, and they will arrive within 5 minutes with the money. Now, how can you argue with that?

Mako: Hm. Sounds reasonable.

Miyabi: ... Fine. Deal. Gregory will come with us to look at the horns and you will bring the money.

Lewis: Uh-uh. No way.

Gregory: Done.

Lewis & David: \*Face-palm\* Ugh!

Gregory: Where do we go?

Mako: We'll take Highway 5 to the Victoria Flood Barrier. We'll meet on the powerhouse bridge. After he has seen the horns, we'll give you 5 minutes to show up with the money. If you don't... \*Gets in front of Gregory's face\* The natives will have a new toy to play with. \*Backs away\* We'll get the car. \*She and Miyabi head outside for a moment\*

Lewis: \*Approaches Gregory and Francine\* What are you two doing? They weren't going anywhere.

Gregory: Yes, they were.

Francine: He was going out the door. Look, Lewis, I want those horns back. It's important.

Lewis: I know it's important, but you're risking it again.

Gregory: What else am I gonna do? I don't have any other options.

So, we might as well take this chance, okay?

Miyabi: \*Returns\*

Lewis: \*!\* \*Hides\*

Miyabi: The car's ready, Mister Thornton. Come on.

Gregory: Coming. \*Leaves\* See you around.

Lewis: \*Emerges\* ... Phew.

Francine: We'll take the old highway to the barrier. It's on the map. We'll get there ahead of them.

Lewis: Okay. Then, what?

Francine: ... We'll think of something, I guess. You're awfully good at that, I've noticed. \*Leaves\* I'll be at the truck.

\*The team regroup\*

Kara: Mission accomplished upstairs.

Frida: What's next?

Lewis: ... We'll think of something.

Jeremy: \*Notices something\* Wait. Where's Greg?

Lewis: ... \*He and his team point to the car leaving\*

Everyone: \*They all realize\* ... Oh.

# The Barrier

Reads: 5 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~Private Jet~

\*Mako, Miyabi, and Gregory arrive\*

Gregory: \*Glances at them\* ... \*To himself\* And so, we meet.

Honami: How did the meeting go?

Miyabi: Zheng didn't show up.

Ryūji: \*Notices Gregory\* And who's this stranger?

Mako: Gregory Thornton. He's a representative of Zheng.

Gregory: We made a deal. I see the horns and a partner of mine will show up with the money.

Honami: Which is provided by Zheng?

Gregory: Yes, ma'am.

Honami: ... \*Sighs\* Very well. Akane, Nazuna, hold down the fort! Come on, guys.

\*They hop in and the van drives away\*

~Victoria Flood Barrier~

\*The team arrives\*

Francine: I'll stay here at the truck to radio my rangers.

Jeremy: Okay. We're gonna look around. \*He and the others do so\*

\*They find a good lookout spot\*

SpongeBob: Looks like we beat B-Platoon here.

Hilda: \*Pulls out some binoculars and looks around\* No one's here so far. \*Spots something\* Except for that boat. It has to be holding the horns. \*Notices someone\* Huh?! What's he doing here?!

Steven: Who?

Hilda: \*Passes the binoculars\*

Steven: \*Looks through them\* Oh, god. It's B-Platoon's supplier.

Jeremy: What about him?

Steven: It's the head of the Kambezi Defense Force.

Everyone: \*!\*

Kara: You mean, General Seko?

Steven: \*Spots someone familiar\* Oh, it gets worse. \*Passes the binoculars to Frida\*

Frida: \*Looks through them\* Hey, isn't that soldier one of the guys who tried to hang Gregory back at the refinery?

Steven: It is. Which means he knows him.

Frida: And if he sees Gregory...

Victor: Gregory's a goner. Oh, boy.

David: So, what should we do? How are we going to prevent this?

Lewis: Simple. All we have to do is get down there before Gregory and B-Platoon do.

Maya: Sounds simple enough. If we can get to the bridge, we should be able to set up a trap.

Louise: But how do we get down there? I mean, without them spotting us?

Jeremy: \*Looks around\* ... Think like MacGyver. Think like MacGyver. Think like MacGyver. Think like- \*Spots a gutter\* ... \*Smirks\* Shingle bolt flume.

Hilda: \*?\* Shingle... what?

Jeremy: Follow me and I'll tell you! \*Leads the way\*

~Gutter~

Jeremy: \*He and the others arrive\* Okay. Here we are.

Louise: ... \*Examines the gutter... and realizes\* Don't tell me we're really gonna slide down this thing!

Jeremy: We are.

Frida: Oh, no.

Hilda: Oh, yes!

David: Of course, you'd say that.

Jeremy: \*Drops down to the gutter\* Here we go! \*Slides down\*

SpongeBob: \*He and Hilda drop down\* Hold tight.

Hilda: \*Clings onto SpongeBob\* Ready.

SpongeBob & Hilda: \*They both slide down\* WOOHOO!

\*The others (reluctantly) do the same process\*

David: \*Drops down\* Oh, gosh. \*Slides down\*

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!

~End Of The Gutter~

\*They all splash out and come to a stop near the bridge\*

Jeremy: \*He and the others slowly get up\* ... Sorry for letting you guys do that.

Hilda: Are you kidding?! That was fun! It just brought back some memories of mine!

Frida: You mean, back in Trolberg?

David: \*Groaning\* Oh, cruddlesticks.

SpongeBob: What's a "cruddlestick"?

Kara: What's a "cruddle"?

David: Ah, it's none of your business.

Louise: \*Spots a van coming\* Quick! Hide!

\*They do so, allowing the van to pass by without noticing them\*

Steven: B-Platoon.

Victor: About time they arrived.

Lewis: Which means Greg's with them.

Maya: And the defector. Maybe, we can pull them both out.

Jeremy: First, we need to figure out *who* the defector is.

~Bridge~

\*The van stops\*

Honami: Ryūji, Chihiro, Tetsuya, Miyabi, with me. \*She and the ones she chose exit the van\* Wait here with Mako and Yume, Mister Thornton. \*She and the others leave\*

Gregory: Okay.

Yume: ... \*Exits the van\* I'm gonna stretch my legs.

Mako: ... \*Exits the van\* Me too.

Gregory: You do that. I've had enough exercise.

\*B-Platoon approaches Seko and his soldier\*

Seko: You are late.

Ryūji: It was Zheng's fault, not ours.

Soldier: Where is the money?

Chihiro: Zheng's people want to see the horns first.

Soldier: \*Aims his rifle at them\* That's not our agreement.

Tetsuya: Whoa. Easy now.

Soldier: Not so tough now without your gun, huh?

Jeremy: \*He and the others peep at the truck\* Alright. SpongeBob, Hilda, help me get Greg. Maya, get the defector. The rest of you need to stay here. We'll get them out. You'll only come in if we say so.

Everyone: Got it.

Seko: I warned you, eh?

Miyabi: Look, Zheng has a system.

Seko: What kind?

Miyabi: As soon as this representative sees the horns, he will signal his partner, and then, she'll bring the money.

Seko: Representative?

Soldier: What representative?

Honami: He's in our van. Zheng likes to play it safe.

Seko: ... Fine then.

Soldier: ... \*Lowers his rifle\*

Ryūji: \*Looks down at the boat\* Reveal the crates!



\*The poachers do so\*

Chihiro: \*Turns to the van\* Okay, Gregory! Come on out! You can take a look at the horns!

Mako: Alright, Greg. Let's go.

Gregory: \*Nods\* Let me just- \*Notices something\* Huh? \*Struggles\*

Yume: What's wrong?

Gregory: My seatbelt. It's... stuck.

Mako: It's stuck?

Yume: How?

Gregory: I don't know. \*Struggles with it\*

Yume: \*Notices the other coming their way\* Gregory, they're coming.

Gregory: Yeah, I know.

Jeremy: Follow my lead. Okay?

SpongeBob: Okay.

Hilda: Got it.

Maya: Just tell us when.

Tetsuya: \*He and the others approach the van\* Come on, Gregory, get out of the van.

Gregory: My seatbelt's stuck!

Miyabi: I just checked the seatbelts before we left for Gold City. How can it jam now?

Gregory: I don't know! It's your vehi- \*Notices the soldier\*

Soldier: ... You.

Everyone: \*?\*

Gregory: ... Me?

Honami: You know him?

Soldier: What kind of game is this?

Seko: What are you talking about?

Miyabi: He's one of Zheng's people. What about him?

Soldier: This man lied, you fool! I caught him snooping around the refinery! We tried to hang him, but some other weirdos came to his rescue! \*Aims his rifle at Gregory\* But this time, you will die!

\*A blue bolt zaps the rifle out of the soldier's hands\*

Seko: What the...?! \*He and the others turn to see...\*

Jeremy: Not on our watch!

Soldier: It's them! The guys who rescued him!

Ryūji: Well, if it isn't the legendary Kid Zap.

Jeremy: Well, if it isn't the one Crimson Elite platoon I've yet to encounter.

Honami: \*Recognizes someone\* \*!\* \*Smirks\* Maya Satō.

Maya: Hello, Honami. Still ruthless as ever.

Honami: Still stupid as ever. You just had to defect over to Kid Zap's side and influence Masumi and Shiho. Who do you think you are?

Maya: I just wanted nothing to do with the Crimson Elite's shenanigans anymore. Is that too much to ask?

Honami: Maybe, I can let your departure slide, but I won't let you influence any more of our own!

Chihiro: \*Pulls out a shock prod\* Starting now! \*Charges at Maya\*

Maya: \*Stances herself\*

Chihiro: \*Swings at her\*

\*Someone grabs her hand\*

Everyone: \*!\* \*They all turn to see...\*

SpongeBob: I think we found the defector.

Chihiro: ... Y... Y...

\*Camera pans to reveal...\*

Yume: ...

Chihiro: ... Yume?

Yume: ... \*Throws Chihiro back to Honami\* I started to see what Maya saw. I wanted out just like her. I'm never being your underling again, Honami.

Honami: Well, it seems we found our mole problem. Kill her!

\*B-Platoon charges at Yume\*

\*Jeremy, SpongeBob, and Hilda charge at and brawl with B-Platoon, while Maya pulls Yume to safety\*

Gregory: \*Swings the door at Mako, knocking her down\* I lied.  
\*Unbuckles himself\* I was just stalling.

\*Jeremy, SpongeBob, and Hilda knock down Tetsuya, Seko, the soldier, and Miyabi (in that order), prompting Honami, Chihiro, and Ryūji to run away\*

Jeremy: Cover us! \*He and SpongeBob chase them\*

\*The others emerge\*

Louise: \*Follows them\* Hey, wait up!

Tetsuya: \*Tries to pull out his handgun\*

Chihiro: ... Honami! \*Runs to the railing and looks down, only to see Honami laid out on the crates\* ... Honami?

Jeremy: ... \*His grip starts to loosen\* Uh-oh. \*Loses it\* GREG!

SpongeBob: \*Jumps onto the railing and stretches down\* I'm-a coming, Jeremy! \*Grabs him\*

Gregory: \*Arrives and grabs SpongeBob's stretched legs\* Hang on! I'll pull you up! \*Does so\*

Louise: Me too! \*Helps out\*

Hilda: So will I! \*Does the same\*

Jeremy: ... What... the heck?

SpongeBob: Hey. It's not your fault. This old bridge just buckled. Alright?

Jeremy: ... Whatever. I just hope she lived. It wasn't that big of a drop.

# Bonfire

Reads: 4 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

{Nighttime}

~Nabo Ranch~

In the aftermath of the mission, the team brought back the stolen horns to Nabo Ranch, where Francine and the rangers held an event for everyone to see.

Francine: I don't know how thank you guys.

Jeremy: It's fine, ma'am. We're just doing what we do best. We help people.

Francine: And I hope you continue doing that.

SpongeBob: Oh, we will.

Cartwright: \*He and Amir arrive\* Well, we got 'em all. B-Platoon, General Seko, Mister Zheng...

Amir: Just about everyone involved, save for Yume Kobashi of course. Maya's request. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the private jet they used to fly to Kambezi.

Gregory: Yeah, I saw two more girls at the private airstrip. I guess they got spooked and flew off.

Cartwright: We'll still find them. As for you, Gregory, I have some unfortunate news for you: Due to compromising Interpol files, and your rogue attitude... you've been sacked.

Gregory: ... Go figure. Looks like I'm just a regular bounty hunter then.

Cartwright: On a bright note, we're allowing you to keep the reward money since you succeeded in capturing B-Platoon. If anything, Interpol wants the bounty off their plate.

Hilda: \*Approaches them\* So, what are you gonna do with the reward money, Greg?

Gregory: Oh, I don't know. Probably finance the next one.

Amir: The next one?

Gregory: Yeah, didn't I tell you?

Cartwright: Tell us what?

Gregory: Right before I left, I found out there was one other case that you never cracked. A guy named Zhukov.

Cartwright: Oh, right. That guy.

Gregory: He jumped bail about 6 years ago with a bunch of those Fabergé eggs. I got a tip that he was in Russia and I thought-

Amir: Bud. Please.

Gregory: ... Yeah, it's a crazy idea. Protecting the rhinos is a better use for that reward money.

Cartwright: ... Good man. Now, let's stand by and watch what Miss Willard has to say.

Francine: Is that camera rolling?

Cameraman: Yep. It's rolling.

Reporter: Go ahead, Miss Willard.

Francine: \*Clears her throat\* Ladies and gentlemen. My name is Francine Willard. Today is a day of hope. We hope that the people of the world will recognize the plight of the black rhino before it's too late. As we burn these horns, we appeal to the leaders of the world to save the black rhino from extinction. By enforcing the

worldwide import ban on rhino horns. Please help us. \*Turns to the rangers\* Rangers.

\*The rangers nod and proceed with the lighting\*

\*The pile of horns is set ablaze\*

Francine: And so, the deed is done.

\*Everyone applauds\*

Hilda: Do you think it'll work?

Jeremy: I hope so, Hilda. I sure hope so.

Hilda: ... If you don't mind... I'd like to join your group.

Jeremy: Really?

Hilda: Of course. After going through what we just experienced, I'd love to see what else you guys have to offer.

SpongeBob: ... I guess it wouldn't hurt.

Jeremy: ... \*Sighs\* Okay. I'll take it into consideration.

Hilda: \*Smiles\*

Jeremy: However, I'd like one thing in return while I'm at it: We'd like to see what Trolberg is like.

Amir: "We"?

Jeremy: If what you and your friends said about it is true, then we'd like to see for ourselves.

Hilda: ... \*Smirks\* Okay. You have yourself a deal.

Jeremy: \*Chuckle\*



# B & D (Guys)

Reads: 10 | Votes: 0 | Comments: 0

~New York~

Sometime later, B-Platoon is being transferred to an Interpol prison in New York, away from the hands of the Japanese Government.

Honami: ...

Ryūji: ...

Chihiro: ... \*Sniff\*

Tetsuya: ...

Mako: ...

Miyabi: ... One of these days, I'm gonna get my hands on Kobashi.

Guard: Well, you're gonna be locked up for a long time. So, too bad, so sad.

Honami: Oh, you're gonna eat those words soon.

Guard: You and what army?

Guard 2: \*Notices something behind the truck\* Uh... I think we're about to find out. We've got two bikers, one on each side.

Guard: \*Notices something else\* ... Wait. Is that a... tow truck?

Sure enough, a tow truck is reversing at the police truck.

Ken: \*Chuckling evilly\*

\*The two bikers attach the hooks to the police truck, allowing Ken to lift it off it's driving tires\*

Guard: Oh, no!

Guard: \*Uses the radio\* Dispatch! Come in, dispatch! This is Unit 211! We're under attack!

\*The two trucks come to a stop\*

\*The bikers pull the guards out of the truck and knock them unconscious, before removing their helmets\*

Haruki: Whoo! That was a cakewalk!

Kanji: Not quite. \*Aims his gun at a guard\*

???: Hey!

Kanji: \*Turns to...\*

Kiyotaka: Leave them be. \*Conjures a fire sword\* We're just here for the prisoners. \*Slices the backdoors open\*

Honami: ... Thanks.

Ryūji: What kept you?

Kiyotaka: Hard to locate each other these days. \*Uncuffs all of B-Platoon\* I heard Kobashi defected.

Honami: Oh, don't remind us. Maya's departure really has influenced Yume.

Kiyotaka: Well, considering the circumstances, it might be a good time to enact... "you-know-what".

Chihiro: \*!\* You mean...?

Kiyotaka: Mm-hmm. Let's head back to Japan. We're going to look for her now.

Miyabi: Wait. Look for who exactly?

Kiyotaka: ... My sister.